Diabetes

Types of Diabetes[1]

> Diabetes mellitus is a group of diseases characterized by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. There are several types of diabetes.

> **Type 1** diabetes most often appears during childhood or adolescence and accounts for 5-10% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. In type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system destroys the cells that produce insulin, the substance necessary to regulate blood glucose.

> **Type 2** diabetes usually begins as insulin resistance, a disorder in which the cells do not use insulin properly. As the need for insulin rises, the pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce insulin. Type 2 accounts for 90–95% of diagnosed diabetes. Type 2 diabetes most often appears in people older than 40 but is increasingly being diagnosed in children and teens and is no longer considered an adults-only disease.

> **Gestational** diabetes is a form of glucose intolerance diagnosed in some women during pregnancy. Women who are diagnosed with gestational diabetes during pregnancy have a 20-50% chance of developing diabetes in the next 5-10 years. A portion (5-10%) of these women will have type 2 diabetes immediately following pregnancy.

> **Prediabetes** is a condition that occurs when a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal, though not high enough to be diagnosed with diabetes. People with prediabetes are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Risk Factors[2]

> **Type 1** – autoimmune, genetic and environmental.

> **Type 2** – older age, obesity, physical inactivity, race/ethnicity (African-Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, and some Asian American and Pacific Islanders), family history of diabetes, and prior history of gestational diabetes.

> **Gestational** – obesity, race/ethnicity (African-Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and American Indians), and family history of diabetes.

Prevention[2]

> At present, there is no known way to prevent type 1 diabetes.
> Engaging in regular physical activity and losing weight can help prevent type 2 diabetes.

Cost[1]

In 2002, the average yearly health care cost for a person with diabetes in the U.S. was $13,243, compared with $2,560 for a person *without* diabetes.

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Complications of Diabetes[1]

- Diabetes is the 6th leading cause of death in the U.S.
- Adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to die of heart disease than adults without diabetes and are two to four times more at risk of having a stroke.
- About 60–70% of people with diabetes experience mild to severe forms of nervous system damage.
- More than 60% of nontraumatic lower extremity amputations occur in people with diabetes.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults 20–74 years of age.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure.
- Uncontrolled diabetes during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy can result in excessively large babies, posing a risk to the mother and child.

Preventing Complications of Diabetes[3]

- Attend diabetes self-management class.
- See a health professional yearly.
- Have A1C test two to four times a year.
- Control
    - Blood glucose levels
    - Blood pressure, and
    - Blood lipids.
- Quit smoking.
- Get a yearly
    - Comprehensive foot exam,
    - Dilated eye exam,
    - Dental exam, and
    - Flu shot.
- Get a pneumonia shot.
- Exercise three times a week for at least 20 minutes.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Lose weight if BMI >25.

References

1- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2005
http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2005.pdf

2- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. FAQs: Basics About Diabetes, 2006
http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/faq/basics.htm

3- Health Disparities Collaborative. HDC Topics: Diabetes
http://www.healthdisparities.net/hdc/html/collaboratives.topics.diabetes.aspx

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